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TO: JACarver, Jr.
FROM: DCI/SAVA

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SAIGON

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REFS: A. SAIGON 47027 (IN 579883) *

B. SAIGON 47048 (IN 580679) **

1. YOUR DISCUSSION WITH GENERAL ABRAMS ~~KKKXKXKX~~ REPORTED

25X1 IN PARA 8 OF REF A REGARDING [] POSITION ON NORTH VIETNAM
MANPOWER OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST HERE. IN A SENSE BOTH
YOUR COMMENTS WERE RIGHT.

2. ON ONE HAND, WE BELIEVE THAT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE
EVIDENCE OF INCREASING SHORTAGES OF QUALIFIED COMPANY GRADE
OFFICERS AND NCO PERSONNEL FOR INDIVIDUAL UNITS IN NVA ARMY.
FURTHER REPLACEMENT PERSONNEL ARE LESS EXPERIENCED AND
NOT AS WELL PREPARED FOR COMBAT AS THEY WERE EARLIER IN THE
WAR. MORALE IS CONSIDERABLY LOWER AND DESERTION RATES
AMONG THE NEWER RECRUITS HIGHER. THE NUMBER OF INFANTRY
DIVISIONS AVAILABLE WITHIN NORTH VIETNAM FOR HOME DEFENSE
OR USE ELSEWHERE IN INDOCHINA IS AT LOWEST LEVEL OF THE WAR.

COORDINATING OFFICERS

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3. ON OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN, WE ESTIMATE THAT NORTH VIETNAM STILL HAS A MANPOWER POOL OF ABOUT 1.3 MILLION MALE CIVILIANS AGED 15 TO 39 WHO ARE FIT FOR MILITARY SERVICE. APPROXIMATELY HALF A MILLION OF THESE ARE IN THE PRIME 17-25 AGE BRACKET. A NEW CROP OF MORE THAN 100,000 MEN COME OF AGE EACH YEAR. HANOI, THUS, COULD INDUCT UP TO 100,000 PER YEAR WITHOUT FURTHER DRAWDOWN OF ITS MANPOWER RESERVE AND IT WOULD TAKE SEVERAL YEARS AT THE 1968 PEAK RATE OF 200,000 TO BRING RESERVES IN THE PRIME AGE TO THE POINT OF EXHAUSTION.

4. IN SUMMARY, WE BELIEVE THAT CANNON FODDER IS STILL AVAILABLE FOR HANOI TO CONTINUE EXPANDING MANPOWER IN THE LOWER RANKS AT PRESENT OR SOMEWHAT HIGHER RATES. RAW QUANTITY, THUS, IS SUFFICIENT. QUALITY IS ANOTHER MATTER. WE WOULD BE SURPRISED TO SEE THE CREATION OF WHOLE NEW COMBAT DIVISIONS IN NORTH VIETNAM DURING THE NEXT SIX-TWELVE MONTHS PRIMARILY BECAUSE OF THE SHORTAGE OF CADRE.

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5. RE REF B. THERE HAVE BEEN COMPREHENSIVE STUDIES COMPLETED WITHIN THE PAST YEAR ON BOTH THE NORTH VIETNAM AND SOUTH VIETNAM MANPOWER SITUATION. OUR CONTINUING RESEARCH ON THESE PROBLEMS INDICATE THAT OUR CONCLUSIONS (REFLECTED ABOVE) REMAIN SOUND. PERTINENT STUDIES

WOULD HAVE TO PLEASE LET US KNOW IF ABOVE MEETS YOUR NEEDS.

END OF MESSAGE

C/S Comment: * Info based on COS participation in MACV command meeting 1600 local time 7 April.

** Station interested in knowing if there are any recent Agency studies on North Vietnamese man power situation that not yet sent to station.

George A. Carver, Jr.

SAVA

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